

## Microsoft Offers Works For Free

July 31, 2007 by mohdsallal

Microsoft has released the new version of Microsoft Works as a free, ad supported office package that will compete directly with Open Office and Google Docs & Spreadsheets.

The Works package offers word processing, spreadsheet and slide (powerpoint) functionality partially based on code from older versions of Microsoft Office.

The move by Microsoft to offer a free office suite comes as online office packages including Google Docs & Spreadsheets, [Thinkfree Office](#) and [Zoho](#) continue to grow market share due to increased broadband penetration, online convenience and lower costs.

It was not disclosed whether the new version of Microsoft Works would sync with or support Microsoft's online services under the Live brand. Whilst the version was said to be released July 27, it was not clear where it could be downloaded from or accessed.

Microsoft Works first launched as a Mac application in 1986.

Posted in [Google](#), [Google Docs and Spreadsheets](#), [Microsoft](#), [Open Office](#), [Thinkfree Office](#), [Zoho](#) | [Leave a Comment »](#)

## StreetAdvisor Launches New Services

July 31, 2007 by mohdsallal

[StreetAdvisor](#) will today launch a range of new upgrades that will give homeowners, renters, and buyers a more complete picture of where they could live.

The new StreetAdvisor provides a real-life "insider" view that provides users the ability to learn and share vital details about where they live, including noise levels, traffic, neighbors, entertainment, and public services in a similar way to travel review sites. Recommendations and negative experiences about local businesses, entertainment and services will also be supported.

StreetAdvisor's street based reviews have been expanded to include cities, states, and countries.

Upgraded guidebooks now include four broad categories with the ability to create additional topics in a similar fashion to a Wiki.

Other new features include a member recognition system, "local expert program" and StreetAdvisor Billboards, a service that offers the ability to secure exclusive "run-of-street" advertising opportunities on a per

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city basis.

The site is currently in public beta and offers coverage for the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia.



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## Facebook Outage

July 31, 2007 by mohdsallal

□

[Facebook](#) is down, and has been so since at least 10 am PST. Anyone notice it down earlier than that? We've emailed the company for their comment.

**Update:** Facebook is now back up as at 11:30am PST

**Update:** Statement from Facebook:

This morning, we temporarily took down the Facebook site to fix a bug we identified earlier today. This was not the result of a security breach. Specifically, the bug caused some third party proxy servers to cache otherwise inaccessible content. The result was that an isolated group of users could see some pages that were not intended for them. The site has now been restored and we apologize for any inconvenience this may have

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## Tangler's Embedded Discussions

July 31, 2007 by mohdsallal

Australian startup [Tangler](#) has created a next generation forum product that allows real-time discussions to occur without page refreshes. Their forum product is both synchronous and asynchronous – meaning it competes as much with [Meebo](#) (web based chat) as it does with existing forum applications. Users can also easily embed rich media into the discussion □

We first wrote about Tangler in [February 2006](#), when it was deep in a development. They've been quietly working with beta partners for the last six months, and recently opened their doors to allow anyone to create a new forum. Last week, the 1,000th forum was created on Tangler.

Tangler forums are also decentralized. Any discussion/forum can easily be embedded in a third party website or websites. The discussion occurs simultaneously on all instances of the forum. [See here](#) for an example of an embedded forum.

Examples of startups using Tangler as their forum include [Weewar](#), [Particls](#) and [Omnidrive](#).

See our recent coverage of [Meebo Rooms](#) as well. It is interesting to see web chat and forums colliding towards the same end product.

Posted in [Meebo](#), [Tangler](#) | [Leave a Comment »](#)

## FCC Fails To Mark Its Place In History

July 31, 2007 by mohdsallal

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The FCC released the auction rules on the 700 MHz spectrum today. [Google formally requested \(and we supported\)](#) that the new bandwidth have four requirements: open applications, open devices, open services and open networks. Together these rules could quickly make the U.S. wireless space competitive with European and Asian markets that we have long trailed.

The [auction rules](#) include much of what Google requested, including open devices and open applications. But open services and open networks are out, meaning third parties may not get access to the networks at fair wholesale rates. Will we see a tidal wave of innovation in the space? It's too early to tell. The FCC hedged its bets to keep AT&T, Verizon and other incumbents happy. New players like Google may or may not participate.

This is clearly a compromise decision. History will decide if the FCC commissioners made the right choices. Perhaps their feeble attempts to stand up to AT&T, Verizon and their army of lobbyists will have been enough to get the U.S. back in the race with the rest of the mobile world. Or perhaps not. Just for record keeping purposes, Kevin Martin (Chairman) and commissioners Jonathan Adelstein and Michael Copps are willing to fight for openness. Commissioners Deborah Taylor Tate and Robert McDowell, who are parroting much of the nonsense that [AT&T spewed](#) last week, are clearly lining up with the incumbents.

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## Google Licenses Gmail In Japan

July 31, 2007 by mohdsallal

Google has licensed Gmail to Japanese mobile operator KDDI Corp.

The email service will be branded by KDDI and work on the "auone.jp" domain. Google will provide the backend for the service and account holders will have the same functionality as provided by Gmail itself, including 2GB of storage. □


The announcement continues a recent string of deals in Asia for Google as it attempts to build market share and presence in countries it does not dominate. More recently, Google has licensed search to [a number](#) of Chinese search portals.

KDDI is currently Japan's second largest mobile operator behind NTT DoCoMo. Third ranked mobile operator Softbank owns Yahoo Japan, which according to [Smart Money](#) is not as strong in search, but leads Google in other services including email.

Posted in [Gmail](#), [Google](#) | [Leave a Comment »](#)

## Action Engine Raises \$20 Million

July 31, 2007 by mohdsallal

 Mobile applications developer [Action Engine](#) has raised \$20 million in new round led by Baker Capital.

Previous investors Northwest Venture Associates and The Spangler Group also participated in the round.

The company develops mobile device software that allows media companies and mobile operators to provide music, video and other content on mobiles. Action Engine's ODP platform incorporates intelligent mobile advertising, support for mass market handsets and

broad management capabilities that are claimed to “increase profitability, lower cost of ownership and drive brand-awareness.” Existing clients include MSNBC, TiVo, Sprint and Verizon.

Action Engine’s total funding to date is now \$65 million. The company plans to use the funds to accelerate its sales, marketing and distribution efforts.

Posted in [Action Engine](#) | [Leave a Comment »](#)

## 50 Cent Gets Down With YouTube

July 31, 2007 by mohdsallal

[YouTube](#) has announced a new music competition that will be judged by leading artists 50 Cent, Common and Polow da Don.

YouTube OntheRise Rap Edition is a follow up to last year’s YouTube Underground contest and seeks to discover the best rap and hip-hop artists in the United States.

Unsigned talent who aspire to be professional artists have until August 17 to submit their videos. The final winner will be announced September 7.

The winner will be awarded a trip to New York City to professionally record a single for G-Unit/Interscope Records, a \$10,000 gift card from Guitar Center, and their video will be featured on the homepage of YouTube.

Further contest information is available [here](#).

Posted in [50 Cent](#), [Music](#), [YouTube](#) | [Leave a Comment »](#)

## Are Terrorists Using Second Life To Plan Attacks?

July 31, 2007 by mohdsallal

OK, so sensationalistic headlines targeted at Second Life are so last week; from FBI related [gambling bans](#) to [animal sex](#), we’ve seen a lot. Now there [are allegations being printed](#) by News Corp in Australia that suggest that the next major terrorist attack on a Western country could be being planned in Second Life, and yes, as can be seen in the picture to the right, 9/11 is being used as a reference point as well.

The report describes in detail various griefer operations as being terrorist attacks and goes on to say that:

On the darker side, there are also weapons armouries in SL where people can get access to guns, including automatic weapons and AK47s. Searches of the SL website show there are three jihadi terrorists registered and two elite jihadist terrorist groups.

The fear factor is so thick, it can’t be easily paraphrased

With the game taking such a sinister turn, terrorism experts are warning that SL attacks have ramifications for the real world. Just as September 11 terrorists practised flying planes on simulators in preparation for their deadly assault on US buildings, law enforcement agencies believe some of those behind the Second Life attacks are home-grown Australian jihadists who are rehearsing for strikes against real targets. Terrorist organisations al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiah

traditionally sent potential jihadists to train in military camps in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Southeast Asia. But due to increased surveillance and intelligence-gathering, they are swapping some military training to online camps to evade detection and avoid prosecution.

The terrorists must get broadband in their caves now.

Rohan Gunaratna, author of Inside al-Qaeda, says it is a new phenomena that, until now, has not been openly discussed outside the intelligence community....**"They are rehearsing their operations in Second Life** because they don't have the opportunity to rehearse in the real world"

Be alert, but not alarmed

"Community representatives are relied on to report suspicious or inappropriate behaviour to the owners or the SL authorities, just as in the real world."

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## Retrevo's "Snapshot" Graphs Products By Price And Features

July 31, 2007 by mohdsallal

Retrevo, one of a number of automated, aggregate review sites we previously covered, is releasing an alpha version of a new product comparison feature called "Product Snapshot". The feature helps find the greatest "bang for your buck" by visually displaying how a product's price and features stack up against others in its category. CEO Vipin Jain will demo the feature at tomorrow's Stanford Summit. The feature will go public at the end of September.

"Product Snapshot" maps a product's place on a price/feature graph relative to other products in the category. The mapping of the product is based on a statistical analysis of a number of major features and prices drawn from across the web. Products with fewer features for their price fall at the bottom left of the chart, while products with high prices and many features are placed toward the upper right. For example, this [search](#) for a Samsung LN-S4696D shows where the LCD TV places relative to other mid-range TVs.

The snapshot also includes links to products with  better features, similar products, and cheaper products. These features will be released at the end of September when the full feature is pushed live.

Retrevo distinguishes itself by focusing on consumer electronics and finding a great deal of auxiliary material on products. Searches return PDF product manuals, aggregate user ratings, product previews, written reviews, forums & blogs, and shopping links. The data is pulled from thousands of sites including those of manufacturers and retailers. Retrevo's depth of information makes it best suited for initial product research instead of quick price comparisons.

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